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*Di* *Amir*  
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Afghanistan: Soviet Withdrawal

At a briefing in Kabul on 6 June, the Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister said that the Soviet withdrawal had been halted because of reported Pakistani violations of the Geneva accord. There have been other unsubstantiated reports that the withdrawal has been halted. Yesterday, however, the Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman, Gerasimov, said that the USSR was continuing the withdrawal "but cannot ignore violations of the Geneva Accord".

2. I cannot confirm from intelligence which of these statements is correct; but I believe it unlikely that the withdrawal has been completely halted, or if it has, that the halt will be other than of short duration. It is more likely that there has been a temporary halt in withdrawal from Kandahar: and that the Russians by their veiled threats of action in response to Pakistani violations may be laying the ground for a change in the timetable for total withdrawal. They are committed under the Records to pull out half their troops by 15 August (three months after the beginning of the withdrawal). They may have decided that they can justify a more protracted withdrawal, which would of course provide a longer period of support to the Najib regime.

3. We shall be issuing a JIC paper on the state of withdrawal on 16 June.

*PC*  
PERCY CRADOCK

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